

PREVENTION=AWARENESS

Here are some steps you can take to help prevent your child from participating in gang activity.

- Remind your child that you love them and that they can come to you for help with any problem.
- Spend quality time with your child and share your values and morals with them. Let them know what you stand for. **Talk to them.**
- Make time to have dinner as a family as often as possible.
- Help them to feel safe... that you and other adults will protect them.
- Take them to your house of worship.
- Talk to your child about the dangers of gang membership.
- Keep your children occupied in activities so there is less time spent unsupervised in the streets.
- Know where your child is and with whom they are associating.
- Set limits, establish rules (curfew) and stick to them. If reasonable, have your child participate in this decision-making process.
- Monitor what clothing your child wears. Is it always the same colors, beads, bandanna's, etc?.
- Look at your child's books, personal areas and schoolwork for graffiti.
- Monitor on-line computer time: with whom are they talking and which sites are they visiting.

What else can I do?

- Emphasize the importance of getting an education and good grades.
- Take an active interest in their schoolwork.
- Respect your child's feelings and thoughts. Remember feelings are not right or wrong, they're just feelings.
- Really listen to what your child is saying when they speak to you. Look at them when they talk.
- Watch for negative influences.

How can a parent become more educated?

- Involve yourself in your child's education: meet teachers, join the PTA and visit the school.
- Use the Suffolk County Probation Department Hotline # 852-5070 or the email address ganginfo@co.suffolk.ny.us to obtain further information and assistance. These are confidential resources for the community, parents and youth, which provide support through information. Any concerns, questions or inquiries will remain confidential.
- Call the above listed hotline number or utilize the web site to see if there are gang awareness trainings offered in your area.
- Go to the library to find books regarding gangs.

Some facts to ponder!

- Race, economic status, age, gender and community are not relevant when it comes to your child being recruited into a gang.
- If your child comes home looking like they were in a fight, they could have been beaten up or perhaps been beat in. (Beat in / jumped in = an initiation into a gang).
- Girls can get beat in, jumped in, or sexed in.
- Each gang member must produce money for the gang.
- Most gang members have to learn about the gang through "lessons", which are usually in their notebooks.

Visit our web site at: www.co.suffolk.ny.us/probation

Hot line: 631-852-5070

E-mail: ganginfo@co.suffolk.ny.us